



# The Gallatin Ledger

## Tale of Two Houses Arlington House Exhibit at Friendship Hill

The Gallatin House at Friendship Hill has a fresh look. For the next three to four years, the furniture collections of Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial are being stored and displayed at Friendship Hill. Visitors to Friendship Hill can now tour nine furnished rooms in the house. Bedrooms, parlors, a dining room and a kitchen

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are open and furnished, thanks to Arlington House. Many of these rooms have never before been open to the public.

The partnership between Friendship Hill and the Arlington House began with a few problems. Arlington House needed to find storage for furniture and artifacts during a major restoration project. Friendship Hill was interested in expanding the interpretive opportunities through exhibits. The superintendents of the sites learned of the other needs and determined that warehousing and displaying the Arlington House furniture at Friendship Hill would help both sites. Storing the 3,300 artifact collection at Friendship Hill will save taxpayers \$200,000 annually in museum storage costs.

At first glance the common traits of the Ar-



Mary Troy, Curator of Arlington House, and Lawren Dunn, Cultural Resource Specialist at Friendship Hill, work together to install the furnishing exhibit.

lington House and Friendship Hill are not obvious. Their varied architecture points to the differences in the owners' economic classes. Yet each has a storied past. Both families lived in the early American republic although they operated in different spheres of influence. George Washington Parke Custis, builder of Arlington House, was a Virginia gentleman, the step-grandson of our George Washington. His son-in-law, Robert E. Lee also came from the landed gentry of Virginia. Gallatin was an immigrant who purchased land in the western country, though he had never acquired the skills required to run a farm or plantation. Today these historic homes serve as testament to their owners while interpreting their accomplishments.

The Custis-Lee furniture at Arlington is

contemporary to the time Gallatin spent at Friendship Hill after retiring from federal service. By the 1820s, the Gallatin family

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was enjoying a higher standard of living through the efforts of Albert's investments and money managing skills. Though his family's taste and opulent ways often stretched his financial resources, his writings give hints of practical and sturdy furniture in use at the mansion.

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## From the Superintendent

As evidenced in several stories in this newsletter, volunteerism at Friendship Hill National Historic Site is alive and well. It is my sincere pleasure to report that support received from park partners such as the Friendship Hill Association, as well as individual volunteers, has resulted in expanded opportunities for visitors this past year.

FestiFall grew to a two-day event in 2007, and is planned to remain so in 2008. Many helping hands are needed to host such a well attended event, and park volunteers and friends group members account for much of that effort.

Volunteers were also instrumental in preparing the Gallatin mansion display of the furnishings on loan from Arlington House. The popular display has increased visitation to the park, and volunteer workers assist park staff in maximizing tour opportunities for the public.

Information on becoming a park volunteer is available by contacting Volunteer Coordinator Kitty Seifert at 724-725-9190 or by e-mailing [kitty\\_seifert@nps.gov](mailto:kitty_seifert@nps.gov). Information about joining the Friendship Hill Association is available by contacting association president Toni L'Hommedieu, Ph. D., at [tlhomme1942@yahoo.com](mailto:tlhomme1942@yahoo.com) or by writing the Friendship Hill association at P.O. Box 24, New Geneva, PA 15467.

I wish to personally extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has volunteered their time to these varied endeavors. I also welcome and encourage others to become involved in volunteering and experience firsthand how rewarding it can be.

Sincerely,  
Joanne Hanely  
General Superintendent,  
Western Pennsylvania National Parks

## Tale of Two Houses

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Wandering the first floor you will see the rooms interpret the historic Gallatin period. Parlors, dining room and kitchen represent the public area where the family entertained guests. The second floor held the bedrooms where family could retreat in private. It was here the Gallatins advanced their personal studies in history, science and literature. We invite you to take a moment now and imagine yourself as a guest to a by-gone scene.

# Park Employees Assist at Western Wildfires

Television news clips of devastating wildland fires throughout the western and southern U.S. are a common sight each summer and fall. Not as well known, however, is the fact that National Park Service employees from the local area routinely respond to these national disasters and lend a helping hand.

In 2007, the 13-member park Fire Team, which includes employees from Fort Necessity NB, Friendship Hill NHS, and Flight 93 NM, completed twenty assignments, assisting at wildfires burning in Arizona, Nevada, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, California, North Carolina, Florida, and Georgia. Other employees who remained in the parks during these emergencies enabled the Fire Team to respond to these critical needs, covering staff shortages and ensuring that services to the visiting public did not suffer.

National fire statistics reveal that 2007 was an exceptionally busy and tragic year, with an additional 10,000 wildfires burning nearly an additional 1 million acres over and above the five-year average. Members of the park Fire Team maintain qualifications to perform a wide variety of jobs at these wildfires. Some in direct fire operations, others, in support services of the incident. These jobs include Firefighter, Security Specialist, Personnel Time Recorder,

Equipment Time Recorder, Receiving and Distribution Manager, and Base Camp Manager.

The Fire Team has grown in both membership and numbers of successful assignments each year since 2004. Dan Watson, Site Manager at Fort Necessity NB and Friendship Hill NHS sees the involvement of the staff as a win-win situation. "The nation benefits from our ability and willingness to send qualified people to assist at these disasters, and the employees benefit by broadening their skill levels through their participation. Wildfires are managed under what is called the Incident Command System... an organizational structure that expands and contracts to meet the size and needs of any particular incident. This is very valuable training for our people, since they can bring these experiences home with them and apply the same principles of organization to many of the special events we host in the parks," Watson said.

"I'm very proud of the way our people step forward to meet such a challenge," Watson continued. "Whether you look at the Fire Team members living and working under very primitive and often risky conditions, or the rest of the staff who shoulder a heavier workload back here at the park while others are away, it's a great example of team work."



Members of the Western Pennsylvania Fire Team joined forces with national fire team members to provide security at the Tripod Fire in Conconully, Washington..

# Invasive Plants not Welcome at Friendship Hill

Exotic, invasive vegetation is rapidly infesting, colonizing and replacing native vegetation and native wildlife habitat at Friendship Hill National Historic Site. Friendship Hill NHS is also home to several species of native plants listed by the State of Pennsylvania as species of special concern. Some of these plants reach their northernmost limits within the park.

Unfortunately these species of special concern are being crowded out by non-native, invasive plants, such as Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), bush honeysuckles (*Lonicera sp.*), Multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) and several others.

The USDA Forest Service/Forest Health Division, in Morgantown, WV has partnered with the National Park Service to control the spread of the highly invasive Tree of Heaven at Friendship Hill NHS. In 2007, more than 20,000 Tree of Heaven plants at Friendship Hill NHS were pulled



Tree of Heaven's winged seeds continually reintroduce this invasive plant into the park.

by hand or treated with herbicide. The effort to control Tree of Heaven will continue into 2008 and beyond. Seeds continue to come into the park from outside sources; on wind, in the river, and by both visitors and animals, such as birds.

Controlling invasive plants cannot be done successfully by one property owner. Plant seeds and animals do not honor property boundaries. That's why the National Park Service has initiated a local Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA). The Southern Laurel Highlands Plant Management Partnership (SLHPMP) is a CWMA

comprised of federal, state, local, and non-governmental property owners, including the National Park Service, USDA Forest Service, US Natural Resources Conservation Service, the PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry and Ohiopyle State Park, the Fayette County Conservation District, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, and the New Meadow Run Community.

These groups work together in an effort to reduce the spread of noxious weeds. Project Weed Whack 2008 will begin at Fort Necessity NB on March 28-29 and will involve a pot luck dinner, a hike to the American woodcock habitat to watch the evening dance and flight displays of male woodcocks, and a talk about the woodcock habitat restoration project. On the 29th, members of the CWMA and interested volunteers will participate in the removal of bush honeysuckle within the woodcock habitat. Property owners interested in this effort can contact Connie Ranson, Natural Resources Manager for Friendship Hill, at 724-329-5818 or e-mail her at [connie\\_ranson@nps.gov](mailto:connie_ranson@nps.gov).



National Park Service  
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The Gallatin Ledger is the official newspaper of Friendship Hill National Historic Site. Albert Gallatin is best remembered for his thirteen year tenure as Secretary of the Treasury during the Jefferson and Madison administrations. In that time he reduced the national debt, purchased the Louisiana Territory and funded the Lewis & Clark exploration. Gallatin's accomplishments and contributions are highlighted in his restored country estate, Friendship Hill

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

## Park volunteers - We Can't do it Without Them

The Friendship Hill Association, the park's friends group, continues to provide a number of volunteers to help with day-to-day operations at Friendship Hill. Association volunteers also helped Friendship Hill NHS with significant special events. The park's 26th Annual FestiFall celebration is sponsored by the Friendship Hill Association. In 2007, it was expanded to a two-day event for the first time in its history. Over 157 volunteers joined ranks with the park staff to make this the most attended FestiFall to date, with more than 4000 visitors.

Friendship Hill NHS is also developing a new partnership with West Virginia University (WVU) to provide opportunities to their students to participate in volunteer activities and internships at the park. This new partnership will meet the educational needs of the students participating, while helping the National Park Service provide visitor services to the public. During the first two months of this partnership, four students signed on for internships.

Friendship Hill volunteers are developing new exhibit labels and guides, a new Jr. Ranger program, and assisting with the curator to care for the Arlington House furniture collection.

It was a busy year and we couldn't have done it without you. Thank You Volunteers!







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## Expanded FestiFall a Success

After 25 years as a Sunday only festival, FestiFall 2007 at Friendship Hill National Historic Site expanded to two days. FestiFall is the annual celebration of the life and times of Albert Gallatin. "It's become too much to limit to one afternoon," said MaryEllen Snyder, chief of visitor services. The two day event attracted more than 4,000 visitors.

The smells of soup cooked over an open fire, period music, and historic artisans all helped transport those visitor back to the time when Gallatin and his family made their home the edge of the wilderness in western Pennsylvania. The historic foods are always a main draw at FestiFall, but the market fair featuring historic craft demonstrators showcasing their talents contributes to the overall experience. A military encampment featuring historic Revolutionary War and Mexican War soldiers was included. Gallatin arrived in Boston at the

end of the Revolutionary War (1775-1783). Later in life, he was an outspoken opponent of the Mexican War (1846-1848).

Cooperation with West Virginia University in marketing was a large part of the events success. "Through WVU we were able to get a greater on-line presence and marketing to younger groups that we have not reached before," Snyder said.

The Friendship Hill Association is a non-profit group whose mission is to support the National Park Service at Friendship Hill National Historic Site. They sponsor the annual event in cooperation with The National Park Service. If you are interested in being a part of FestiFall or joining the Friendship Hill Association, contact Toni L'Hommedieu, President at 724-569-4403 or e-mail her at tlhomme1942@yahoo.com.

Mark your calendar for September 27-28, 2008, and experience FestiFall yourself.